

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The specification has been amended in order to provide the status of the related application and to correct a reference numeral, as identified in item 1 of the Office Action. No new matter has been added by these amendments.

Claims 15-17 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 12, 18, and 20 have been amended, and no claims have been added. Given that these amendments merely concern the form of the claims, it is believed that the amended claims are supported by the application as originally filed. Consequently, claims 1-14 and 18-39 are currently pending and under consideration.

Initially, the applicants wish to thank the Examiner for allowing claims 1-11 and 25-39 in item 4 of the Office Action. Further, the applicants wish to thank the Examiner for indicating that claims 17-19 contained allowable subject matter in item 3. In that regard, the features of dependent claim 17 as well as intervening claims 15 and 16 have been incorporated into independent claim 12, and claims 15-17 have been canceled. As a result, claims 18 and 20 have been amended to update their dependency. Consequently, it is believed that independent claim 12 and its dependent claims are in condition for allowance.

It should be understood that the above remarks are not intended to provide an exhaustive basis for patentability or concede the basis for the rejections in the Office Action, but are simply provided to overcome the rejections made in the Office Action in the most expedient fashion.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited. If after reviewing this amendment the Examiner feels that any issues remain which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned representative by telephone to resolve such issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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